

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**Lake Preston School District
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2003-2004**

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Dates of On Site Visit: October 14-15, 2003

Date of Report: October 17, 2003

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.

Meets Requirements
The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.

Needs Improvement The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.

Out of Compliance The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.

Not applicable In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

B – District/Agency Instructional Staff Information
C – Suspension and Expulsion Information
D – Statewide Assessment Information
E – Enrollment Information
F – Placement Alternatives
G – Disabling Conditions
H – Exiting Information
Parent Survey, referrals, publications of child find Notices
Comprehensive plan
Yearly child find results

Promising practice

The steering committee identified AREA reading training for elementary special education teachers and general education staff 1-3 as a promising practice. The steering committee also concluded that TTL for special education teachers and regular education teachers is a promising practice. Finally, they identified data retreat for No Child Left Behind for 20 hours as a promising practice.

Meets requirements

The steering committee determined the district has identified systems for receiving documented referrals. The district has surveyed groups involved in the child find activities and reviewed files. The school district has policies and procedures which address child find.

The steering committee determined the district meets the needs of all of the students in the referral process. It was also noted that teachers have had training to assist students in the regular classroom before a referral is made and after a student is receiving services.

The steering committee stated the school district has one student in an out of district placement. The district administrators attends all IEP meetings (either in person or by conference call) and parents are reimbursed for transportation costs.

The steering committee reported the district uses relevant school data to analyze and review their progress toward the state performance goals and indicators. It was also noted the district follows and adheres to the state guidelines for reporting of students suspended, expelled, or dropped out as per the reports required by state regulations. Lake Preston has had no students drop out of school.

The steering committee reported the school district meets the requirements for certified staff. Two teachers are in the process of acquiring the required degrees.

The steering committee noted that teachers have participated in training to meet their needs and the needs of students.

The committee determined administrators encourage staff to attend workshops and trainings. Trainings are also offered/provided for paraprofessionals.

Needs improvement

The steering committee reported one Lake Preston teacher has an authority to act. This teacher is working on her Library Science degree at the University of South Dakota. One teacher is working on his endorsement for 8th grade history. The committee also noted 88% of teachers surveyed feel they have received adequate training which allows them to work with students on IEP's.

Validation Results

Promising practice

The monitoring team concluded the promising practices listed by the district do not meet the standard for promising practice and therefore will be moved to meets requirements.

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meets requirements for general supervision as concluded by the steering committee.

Needs improvement

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified, as needs improvement.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education
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All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

State Tables C,E,F,K, L, M, N

Number of students screened

Preschool age

School age

Budget information

Surveys

Age at referral

Personnel development education

Personnel training

Comprehensive plan

Meets requirements

The steering committee stated current practices and past reviews from the state and federal special education monitoring demonstrate the school district provides free appropriate public education for all children with disabilities. It was also noted that all information is available to the monitoring team to review for assurances of this statement. The steering committee stated that administrators are trained yearly in policies and procedures for expelling or suspending students on IEPs.

Validation Results**Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meets requirements for Free Appropriate Public Education.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

State tables G, H, I, J,

Teacher file reviews

Surveys

Comprehensive plan

TAT information

Initial referral

Parent and Teacher report forms

Meets requirements

The steering committee reported all evaluations are comprehensive and address all areas of suspected disabilities. It was also noted that 100% of parents surveyed felt the evaluations were used to help plan the IEP and parents felt the evaluations were explained so they could understand. The steering committee also reported the utilization of the comprehensive plan, state and federal policies and regulations to ensure compliance.

The committee noted parental surveys indicate children are assessed in all areas of suspected disability as identified during the referral review process and parental consent. The committee noted surveys indicated that a completed evaluation report is given to the designee/special education teacher who then contacts the parents to schedule a meeting within 30 days of receipt of the evaluation results.

The steering committee determined the district provides documentation of eligibility determination to the parent. It was noted the district has policies and procedures in place for eligibility determination.

The steering committee determined the district is following the appropriate state regulations and procedures.

Needs improvement

The steering committee stated teachers have input into the evaluation process, however it is not documented. The staff has started using report forms for teachers in the fall of 2002.

The steering committee noted one student did not meet the 30-day timeline, due to and incomplete outside evaluation.

Out of compliance

The steering committee stated file reviews show functional assessments are completed with students, however, not in all areas of suspected disability. The functional assessments are not always documented in the report and carried over to the present levels of performance.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meets requirements for appropriate evaluation as noted by the steering committee.

Needs improvement

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified, as needs improvement. Through staff interviews and file reviews the monitoring team noted the use of a teacher report form. The monitoring team could not validate that the 30-day timeline as an area of out of compliance, however, the district may want to continue to monitor the timelines for consistent implementation for all students with disabilities.

Out of compliance

ARSD 24:05:25:04.04 Evaluation procedures

Through the review of 16 student records, the monitoring team found the district staff gathers data from classroom teachers and from diagnostic assessment to use as functional information in the evaluation process. However, a written summary of this information was not consistently included in the evaluation

report or in the present levels of performance. The students' present levels of academic performance, their progress in the general curriculum or development of annual goals and short-term instructional objectives therefore did not link to evaluation.

ARSD 24:05:04.02 Parent participation/input into the evaluation planning process

Parent input into the planning of evaluations need to be provided and documented in the student file. District staff telephones the parent but the phone calls were not documented in the student file. Staff also reported that a parent report form is sent with the prior notice and parental rights but is not always returned to the district.

ARSD 24:05:25:06 Reevaluations

ARSD 24:05:27:01.03 Transition services

Through review of 4 student files and staff interviews, the monitoring team noted that transition evaluations were not administered prior to age 16 to assist in developing transition services and activities.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards
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Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

State Table L and M

Surveys

Parental Right document

Public awareness information

Teacher file reviews

Comprehensive plan

Consent and prior notice forms

FERPA disclosure

Meets requirements

The steering committee reported the district has Federal, state, and local policies and procedures regarding requests for due process hearings, to address complaint issues and opportunity for parents to inspect and review all educational records concerning their child in the provision of a free and appropriate public education. There have been no complaints at this time. The steering committee noted the school district has policies and procedures ensuring parents fully understand for what activity consent is being sought. 100% of files reviewed showed parent consent was given

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meets requirements for procedural safeguards as concluded by the steering committee

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

Comprehensive Plan
Student progress data
Budget information
Surveys

File reviews
Personnel training
State K and N
Report form

Meets requirements

The steering committee noted the district has policies and procedures in place for the provision of an appropriate IEP team. 100% of files reviewed showed regular education teachers at all meetings. The steering committee reported the school district utilizes written notices with the required content to all parents and/or guardians and outside agencies are invited to meetings for students of transition age and any other students in need of services not provided by the school.

The steering committee noted present levels of performance include student strengths, weaknesses and areas to be addressed as well as parent input. The present levels of performance show skill-based information, which helps form a good starting point for goal development.

Needs improvement

The steering committee noted two IEP's were not completed on or before the annual review date. One was a student in foster care coming from another district and the IEP had lapsed. The second was a student on a three-year reevaluation waiting for an outside evaluation. The steering committee noted modifications do not always list frequency for students.

Out of compliance

The steering committee stated present levels of performance include student strengths, weaknesses and skill areas to be addressed. The steering committee noted the majority of files reviewed did not include documentation of functional evaluations, and therefore the present levels of performance were not linked to the evaluation. The committee noted that some files did not show how the student's disability affected their progress in the general curriculum. The steering committee reported that of 15 files reviewed an administrator was not in attendance 27% of the time.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meets requirements for regular educators attending the IEP meeting. written notices containing required content and outside agencies are invited to meetings. The monitoring team agrees present levels of performance are exceptional. Please refer to principle three appropriate evaluation for more information about documentation of transition outcomes and services.

Needs improvement

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as needs improvement for annual review date, timeline for IEP following a three-year reevaluation and frequency of modifications as concluded by the steering committee.

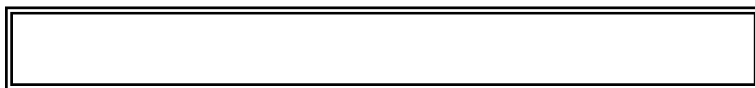
Out of compliance

ARSD 24:05:27:01.01

Through interview with regular education staff, special education staff and administration the monitoring team determined administrators do not demonstrate a strong commitment to purposefully and consistently attend IEP meetings in their entirety. It was also noted that the elementary principal would sign as a team member in attendance but then would often leave the meeting or work on other activities during the meeting.

The school district is responsible to provide a representative who:

- Is qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities;
- Is knowledgeable about the general curriculum; and
- Is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the school district.



After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions; consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

State tables E,G, I, J, F, and N

File reviews

Surveys

Promising practice

The steering committee concluded areas of promising practice to be students behavioral intervention Plans. They are reviewed according to their needs, and if the plan is not working, a meeting is called to review the plan and change it for student success. The team will determine if the LRE is no longer appropriate for the general education classroom.

The steering committee reported general education teachers are part of the team and have input for support services needed to permit children with disabilities to participate in the general education environment. The modification and accommodation pages of the IEP are reviewed yearly for maximum student success and regular education teacher training.

Meets requirements

The steering committee reported policies and procedures in place for addressing the least restrictive environment for students. Behavioral intervention plans have been written for students who require them. All placements of students are done on an individual basis by the IEP team.

Out of compliance

The steering committee noted high school files show justification statements were not filled out properly. They used different placing for the same students in many instances. All other teachers use the accept reject format.

Validation Results**Promising practice**

The monitoring team concluded the promising practices listed by the district do not meet the standard for promising practice and therefore will be moved to meets requirements.

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meets requirements for least restrictive environment as concluded by the steering committee.

Out of compliance**ARSD 24:05:28:01**

Through staff interviews and review of high school files, the monitoring team determined justifications for placement statements did not include the accept/reject method of determining placement. The district showed evidence of improving the methods used for determining placement for students at the high school level.

Work Related Observation

A member of the monitoring team observed an autistic high school student learning to work independently in the school environment. His job was to open the pop and candy machines, fill them and make a list of pop and candy needed to purchase at the store. Last year the student was able to complete four step directions. The student demonstrated the use of twelve step written directions. Student was given a note and he independently went to ask for the keys from the teacher. Then the student went to the teacher's lounge, opened the pop machine, filled it and made a list of pop needed to purchase at the store. Student was able to accomplish this task with minimal cues from the teacher. The student also fills the candy machine with assistance from a peer.

Through conversation, the teacher indicated that she has approached businesses in anticipation of Project Skills for students at age 16. The community has approximately 15 businesses and most businesses are interested in providing work for students with disabilities.

Classroom Observation

Student was observed during 6th grade band playing drums. Student watched peers while playing song and played song appropriately. Student is integrated into band, vocal music and physical education.